Presbyterianism in U.S.A.

PRESBYTERIANISM,

OR THE

CHARACTERISTICS AND SCRIPTURAL AND APOSTOLIC

Constitution of the Presbyterian Church

DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF

ORDINATION OF SEVERAL RULING ELDERS,

OF THE

CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

On Sabbath, the 14th May, 1854.

BY JOHN C. LORD.

BUFFALO:
DEMOCRACY PRINT, 82 MAIN STREET,
1854.

BUFFALO, May 16th, 1854.

Rev. John C. Lord, D. D.

Rev'd and dear Sir:—We listened with great interest and pleasure to your discourse on the Sabbath morning of the 15th instant, on the occasion of the ordination and installation of the recently elected elders, in the Central Church.

Believing that its statement and defence of the Presbyterian polity and its faithful exposition of the relations and duties of the Eldership, would be widely useful if placed in a permanent form, we would respectfully solicit a copy of the same for publication.

We are Rev'd and dear sir,

Yours respectfully,

ARTHUR BURTIS,
L. K. PLIMPTON,
JOHN KYNOCH,
WILLIAM B. MANN,
A. Mc. ARTHUR,
JAMES O. PUTNAM,
S. LOCKWOOD.

Messrs. Burtis, Plimpton and others:

In accordance with your wish I furnish you with a copy of the discourse to which you refer and add a brief account of the history of the Central Presbyterian Church by way of Appendix.

JOHN C. LORD.

PRESBYTERIANISM,

OR THE

Characteristics and Scriptural and Apostolic Constitution

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

—"*The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*" 1 *Timothy*, 3, 15.

The characteristics and constitution of the Presbyterian Church form a suitable topic on an occasion like the present when several individuals, selected by this congregation, are about to be set apart to the office of the Eldership. Claiming to be a branch of that universal and catholic Church composed of all true believers throughout the world it becomes us, at least occasionally, to state the scriptural grounds of our government and discipline.

We propose in this discourse to consider in the first place, the *Characteristics* of the PresbyterianChurch; secondly, her *Scriptural and Apostolic Constitution;* thirdly, the *Office* of the ruling Eldership and its *duties.*

The characteristics of the Presbyterian Church are not frequently exhibited in our pulpits either in respect to our practice, peculiarities or discipline. It

may be confidently affirmed that there is less Sectarian feeling and preaching and less denominational boasting than are ordinarily found among other branches of the visible church. One cause of this is to be found in the fact that Presbyterians give the second place in their system to the mere externals of religion, insisting rather upon purity of doctrine and practice than upon forms and rites, ordinations and sacraments. Hence what is peculiar in our form of government or in our mode of administering the ordinances is not made the burthen of Presbyterian teaching. How rarely from any of our pulpits is a discourse delivered upon the constitution and discipline of the Presbyterian Church. Compared with the ministrations of other denominations, the sermons of our pastors are infrequent even upon the subjects of church membership and the Sacraments. Paul thanked God that he had baptized none of the Corinthians but Crispus and Gaius and the household of Stephanas, "for Christ," says the Apostle, "sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel. Our pastors, if they do not adopt this language, appear to be imbued with this spirit. Not that they hold the sacraments of the Church as unimportant, but relatively inferior to the things they signify, as the outward signs of an inward grace, as images and symbols only of the hidden life of faith in the soul. If it be a fault of some denominations of christians that they dwell so much upon their external order and ordinations, the neglect of these topics is perhaps an error of the opposite sort in our branch of the church by which the impression is often made that we do not value

the externals of our system resulting in a lamentable indifference in many of our congregations in regard to our discipline and government, our characteristics and peculiarities. A church which in a peculiar sense bears the reproach of the cross, which among christian denominations is the special target for the arrows of infidelity and irreligion, the song of the drunkard and the jest of the scoffer, may at least be pardoned an occasional defence of her position and principles.

Let it be understood in advance, that we make no "divino jure" claims; Presbyterians acknowledge all denominations who maintain the fundamental doctrines of Christianity as parts of the church of Christ, as members of his body entitled to our charity, sympathy and co-operation in every good work. They leave none who believe, to the uncovenanted mercies of God; they invite to the Lord's table all who give evidence of piety; they extend the righthand of fellowship to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ. We only claim that our church is distinguished among the various branches of the visible kingdom of God for certain characteristics which deserve honorable mention, no less than for her scriptural and apostolic constitution, which mark her as in a peculiar manner chosen of God and set for the defence of the Gospel.

In the first place, the Presbyterian communion has ever been remarkable both in the old world and the new, for her earnest and constant defence of doctrinal truth. In Italy the Waldensian church, which is older than the Papacy and substantially connects our doctrine and discipline with the primitive and

apostolic church, has ever maintained the simplicity of gospel order and the purity of gospel faith. Amid the terrors of repeated persecutions, exposed to torture and death, driven to the dens and caves of the earth, saved from extermination only by the vigorous remonstrance of England, then in the main Republican and Presbyterian, this ancient church now for the first time in more than a thousand years, reposes under a constitutional government and is permitted the free exercise of worship.

Of the Waldenses, Milton wrote those immortal words read wherever the English language is known:

"Avenge, O, Lord, thy slaughtered saints whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy faith so pure of old
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills and they
To Heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields where still doth sway
The triple tyrant that from thence may grow
A hundred fold who being learned thy way
Early may flee the Babylonian woe."

The Presbyterian church, whether in Italy or France, Holland or Scotland, has ever earnestly contended for the faith once delivered to the saints; to this day it is one of her distinguishing characteristics. Undismayed, unterrified, unseduced, when others have yielded to the storm, she has stood by the doctrines of grace when these have been assailed by the sword of persecution or as now by floods of obloquy and hatred, by foes within no less than foes without; she has

shorn herself of visible greatness, numbers and wealth to preserve the purity of the faith. She has furnished the champions who have grappled with the various forms of error as they have invaded the church lifting up their floods and waves for the destruction of the heritage of God. She has entered the lists with rationalism, infidelity and formalism, and furnished the men and the weapons from whom the advocates of heresy have met an effectual resistance and suffered a hopeless defeat. No church for this cause is so much abused. Would an infidel express his hatred of the gospel, he sneers at Presbyterianism; does a scoffer wish to blaspheme, he heaps his curses upon the Presbyterian church; would a sensualist who cannot bear the restraints which christianity imposes upon his passions express his enmity against a system which denies the indulgence of ungodliness and worldly lusts, teaching men to live soberly and righteously in this present world, he holds up Presbyterians to scorn as sour and gloomy fanatics; they are the marplots and killjoys in regard to his darling vices. Does an errorist desire to give vent to his hatred of the truth, Presbyterianism is the monster which by the aid of his imagination he clothes in a hideous disguise belaboring the phantom he has evoked with an energy which expresses both his malice and his fear. This enmity of the vicious, the profane and the heretical, is doubtless one proof of the comparative purity of our beloved Zion, one evidence that, as a church, we bear the reproach of Christ. The servant is not greater than his Lord, nor the disciple above his teacher, and the master himself hath said, "if they have persecuted me they will also

persecute you, if they have kept my saying they will keep yours also, if ye were of the world the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

The Presbyterian church, contending only for Christ's cross and crown, cannot be endured or pardoned by the ungodly; they can forgive in the christian communities a love of externals and a conformity to rituals; they are not irritated by a denominational zeal and a defence of sectarian peculiarities, but when the energy of a church is exhibited for the truth as it is in Jesus, for the doctrines which exalt God and stain the pride of human glory, that enforce repentance and faith and a real reformation of heart and life, then they blaspheme and that Sect which is least of all a Sect, is spoken against always by the sensual and skeptical whether in high places or low places, whether they be magnates uttering "great swelling words," in the forum or the Senate, or "lewd fellows of the baser sort who make night hideous" in the dens of infamy and vice. For while sectarianism is a word ever in the mouths of such men, it is not what they really intend, they can forgive all sectarian zeal and bigotry, nay, they are very patient with that apostate church who is the sworn enemy of our free institutions, who does not deny that she would imbrue her hands in the blood of the entire protestant body and renew the terrible persecutions of past centuries if she had the power, they can overlook the "forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats" with all her "signs and lying wonders and deceivableness of unrighteousness." The intolerance, the superstition, the

tyranny of that hierarchy whose history for a thousand years is a series of acts of cruelty, despotism and murder which had their terrible apotheosis in the massacre of the Eve of St Bartholomew, are all disregarded by these pretended enemies of bigotry and superstition who fondle the prophetical beast which only waits the growth of its teeth and claws to devour those who thought to tame it by kindness and to stamp the residue with its feet. But free Presbyterianism with its open Bible, its catholic spirit, its uniform support of civil and religious liberty, is hated by those who can endure Popery because the zeal of Presbyterians is for the honor of God and for the cross of Christ, because in general they are ready for every good work, examples of piety and purity, a terror to evil doers and a praise to them that do well.

A second characteristic of the Presbyterian church is another ground of hostility in certain quarters, although a striking proof of her wisdom, faithfulness, and integrity. While she is not satisfied with forms and sectarian peculiarities, while she ever contends for a spiritual religion and a life of faith in the soul, she has constantly withstood that wild fanaticism which rushing from the frozen regions of formality passes without a pause from this frigid zone to the torrid heats and burning sands of a moral Sahara; which emerges from the desert of ice only to pass over to the desert of fire. The Presbyterian church is eminently conservative, she stands between these extremes, refusing on the one hand the ice and on the other the fire. She makes no assaults upon society and government though seeking to influence and reform both by

gospel truth. She refuses to aid in kindling the torch of civil discord or to arm sections and races against each other. She will not take carnal weapons in the assault upon the strong holds of sin but those alone that are spiritual and mighty through God. Refusing to rush to the same excess of riot with many whose zeal is without discretion, she is reproached by them for her conservatism and law abiding spirit; for fanaticism is ever marked by its bitter and denunciatory spirit toward all who will not aid them to raise and ride the whirlwind and direct the storm which would dash to pieces as a potter's vessel, our social, political, and religious institutions.

In the third place, Presbyterians bear the reproach of Christ in the defence of those doctrines which exhibit the sovereignty of God and the dependence of man. When our Lord entered a certain synagogue and began to preach concerning the acceptable year of the Lord, they all wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, but when in the conclusion of the same discourse he introduced the doctrine of the divine sovereignty and electing love of God instancing the case of the healing of Naaman the Syrian while he passed by many lepers in Israel, they could not endure his words but were ready to gnash upon him with their teeth.

It is a singular fact worthy our particular attention, that the Presbyterian body seem called in this day to defend that system of doctrine concerning which there was a substantial agreement among all Protestants at the Reformation. It will not be denied that the reformed churches with almost entire unanimity, adopted

what is styled the Calvinistic or Augustan scheme as containing the testimony of the Holy Spirit found in the Scriptures. In England, France, Germany, Holland, Switzerland and Scotland, the Reformers saw in the Bible the doctrines of grace. The original Symbols of all these churches show a substantial agreement and the various errors which have crept in and eaten out the life and spirituality of many of them are as much in derogation of their own standard as of the word of God. Consider the case of those men who were called of God to break the slumbers of Europe and startle the scarlet mantled harlot of Rome upon her throne in the seven hilled city. They searched the Scriptures as men who seek for hidden treasures, they sought earnestly and prayerfully the mind of the spirit, they had no preconceived opinions or foregone conclusions to hinder their impartial judgment, for renouncing the authority of Rome they came to the Bible as a book heretofore sealed but now opened to be interpreted by itself without the aid of tradition. Their sincerity and piety were manifest in their endurance of all things for Christ's sake. Scattered as they were in various countries, speaking different languages, their agreement was and is a striking proof that the doctrines which they all acknowledged are those contained in the word of God. Heresies have indeed crept in, multitudes in these communions do not receive the confessions they subscribe and the consequences are seen and read of all men. They have Calvinistic creeds but no unity of faith, they have departed from the truth and God has departed from them, many of these churches are

filled with barrenness and death. The orthodox and pious who are yet to be found in them, are discouraged and hindered in all their efforts, iniquity abounds and the love of many waxes cold, Socinian and Pelagian heresies are proclaimed by the graves of the Reformers, the places where Luther and Calvin and Zwingle uttered the everlasting gospel, are like the valley of vision full of dry bones which can only be revived by the breath of the Almighty. The church which in this day maintains the truth against all gainsayers, all new and vain philosophies, all proclamations of "lo here is Christ or there," which holds fast the form of sound words against all cunningly devised fables, against all the pride and corruption of the unsanctified heart which upholds the ancient integrity of faith when the predicted time has come "when men will not endure sound doctrine," may well be considered a pillar and ground of the truth.

We are in the second place to notice the scriptural and apostolic constitution of the Presbyterian Church. It is not designed here to enter upon a full and labored argument which would be impossible within our prescribed limits, but to give a brief synopsis of our government and discipline, together with their scriptural foundation and fruits.

In our form of government, the preliminary principle asserted is liberty of conscience in matters of faith; it is expressed in these words:

"God alone is Lord of the conscience and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his word or beside it in matters of faith and judgment, therefore they

consider the rights of private judgment in all matters that respect religion as universal and inalienable ; they do not even wish to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power further than may be necessary for protection and security, and at the same time be equal and common to all others."

The constitution next asserts the liberty of every denomination of christians to declare the terms of admission into their communion, the qualifications of their ministers and members as well as the whole system of their internal government which Christ hath appointed, further declaring that even if they err they do not infringe on the liberty or the rights of others but only make an improper use of their own.

Our constitution asserts in the third place, that Christ hath appointed officers in the visible church both to teach and rule and to exercise discipline agreeably to the word of God.

The fourth general position is that truth is alone to holiness and that nothing can be more pernicious or absurd than to place truth and falsehood upon a level and represent it to be of no consequence what are a man's opinions.

As a corrollary from this proposition, our constitution makes effectual provision that all who are admited as teachers should be sound in the faith while it acknowledges that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ, enjoining in such cases mutual forbearance.

It affirms in the next place, that while the character, election and qualifications of church officers are laid down in scripture, yet the election of persons to the

exercise of this authority, is in the congregation in which they are to minister.

In the next place, our constitution assents that all church power is only ministerial and declarative, that the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners, that no church judicatory ought to pretend to make laws to bind the conscience by their own authority but only upon the revealed will of God, and that all ecclesiastical discipline is purely spiritual and moral.

We next acknowledge the universal or catholic church as consisting of all those persons in every nation together with their children, who make profession of the holy religion of Christ and of submission to his laws.

The ordinary and perpetual officers in the church are declared to be Bishops or Pastors, and the representatives of the people usually styled ruling Elders and Deacons.

We maintain the parity of the ministry, for we can discover nothing in the scriptures like Popery or prelacy, one is the head even Christ, and all others are brethren. This appears to us also from the interchangable use of the terms Bishop, Elder and Presbyter in the Sacred Scriptures. We maintain that the Bishops of the primitive church were all Pastors of single congregations, some of whom had more than one, as is manifest from the address of the apostle to the church at Phillippi, including their "Bishops and Deacons." We find also, as we think, in church history and in the admission of some of the Fathers, that Episcopacy was introduced centuries after the death of the last of the Apostles.

Presbyterians believe that the constitution of the Apostolic church is to be found in the synagogue. Here was the primitive "*ecclesia*." When our Lord says "go tell it to the "*church*," to what else could he at that time have referred? The synagogue was always composed of teachers, rulers and people. Here our Lord exercised his ministry, here the Apostles commenced their work. In all the cities of the Gentiles were Synagogues of Emigrant Jews and we find the first teachers of Christianity resorting to them to proclaim both to Jew and Gentile the unsearchable riches of Christ. Here the first christian churches were organized, as we think, upon the model of the Synagogue. There is no evidence that there was any change in their government, nor do we see why there should have been. While the temple service was abrogated by the advent of the Messiah, fulfilling all the symbols of His one sacrifice, the worship of the Synagogue remained unchanged, because there was no reason for any change in the forms of a spiritual worship; there was the teacher or preacher unfolding the word of God; there were the constituted rulers of the "*ecclesia*;" there was the congregation itself, to hearken on every Sabbath to messages from Heaven. This we believe to be the scriptural model; this we follow in our constitution without denouncing those who adopt a different mode. The Presbyterian government is the middle ground betwnen prelacy and independency.

Our constitution maintains the unity of the church and the right of every communicant to the judgment of the whole church in cases of discipline. From the

Session of the particular congregation, he may appeal to the Presbytery, constituted of the ministers and elders in the vicinage; from that judicatory he may ascend to the Synod, which is the union of three or more Presbyteries on the same territory; and finally from the latter body to the General Assembly, representing the entire church which is the court of final resort. Particular churches are thus saved from ruinous heresies, for upon the principles of our government the entire body must become corrupt before the single congregation can be destroyed. The property bestowed by pious founders of religious institutions, cannot upon our system be perverted from its designed uses while the great body of the church is sound. Congregationalism has, in this respect, proved itself to be but a rope of sand. Churches and Colleges endowed by the Puritans, have been wrested from the New England Congregationalists, because they had no supreme judicatory to decide upon questions of doctrine, or to cut off diseased members by discipline. The heresies proclaimed in the Puritan pulpits of Boston and in the chapel of Harvard University, if they could penetrate the "dull ear of death," would cause the bones of their pious founders and first teachers to rattle in their coffins. Besides, we have recently had the proof of the utter helplessness of independency in the vain attempt of the churches in Connecticut to discipline a clergyman for gross errors, the utterance or publication of which by a Presbyterian minister in our connexion, and perhaps in any Presbyterian body, would have been followed by his trial and suspension within the time which is prescribed by the constitution for the

calling of a "pro re nata" meeting of Presbytery and the issuing of its process and judgment. Presbyterians believe that Christ has given to the church an efficient government for its protection, and they instance the Synod at Jerusalem and its decision of questions concerning circumcision and meats offered to idols, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

The constitution of the Presbyterian church, maintains the great principles of civil and religious liberty. This is a marked feature of her government which is essentially republican and opposed to despotism on the one hand and democracy on the other. She acknowledges no head of the visible Christ but Christ himself; "the powers that be," she maintains are ordained of God to rule in the state according to his word and in subjection to that supreme government to which rulers and people are alike accountable. Political liberty, in modern times, owes more to the Presbyterian communion than to any other body of men. They bedewed the hills and glens of Scotland with their blood, in defence of civil and religious liberty. During three reigns, they maintained a conflict against powers and principalities and had no rest or peace until the last of the faithless and tyranical Stuarts was ignominiously expelled from the throne. With a similar spirit, this cross bearing church has departed in our day from her houses of worship, forsaking her ancient inheritance and the places of her dead, abandoning her property and patronage and going out not knowing whither she went, only confident that it was for Christ's cross and crown, for truth and liberty. In England, the commonwealth was accomplished by the Presbyterians and Puritans, and our

Westminster confession is both English and national in its present form, having been adopted by an English assembly of divines and sanctioned by Parliament. It was the same leaven that wrought the overthrow of the second James and established civil liberty in Great Britain. In our own revolution, Presbyterians were invariably on the side of freedom. A distinguished minister of our church was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. South and North, her pastors and members were unanimously on the side of patriotism, as they are now found in all the sectional contests which threaten the integrity of the Union.

Those who have maintained the doctrines of grace, have ever been on the side of freedom, whether in Great Britain or the United States, whether in France or Holland. Despotism in the state, has a natural alliance with despotism in the church. The government of France, which is now a pure despotism, leans on the Hierarchy of Rome. The Emperor of Russia is the head of the church as well as of the state.

The constitution of our church requires an educated ministry; it follows the injunction of the Apostle to "lay hands suddenly upon no man;" it admits no novices into the sacred office; it requires a thorough moral and intellectual training no less than piety and orthodoxy on the part of those who bear her standards in the front of the array against the powers of the world and of darkness.

The Presbyterian church is upon a basis of faith and order which leads her to maintain the desirableness and necessity of revivals of religion. She acknowledges the sovereignty of God the Holy Ghost. She recogni-

ses in the sacraments the means of grace, but she does not esteem them as saving ordinances. She knows no power for the regeneration of men but of God. Her testimony is that of the Apostle, "the kingdom of Heaven is not in word but in power." Her history is a history of revivals. God is yet in the midst of her in demonstration of the spirit. Still with her ancient inflexible regard to truth and order, she demands a scriptural basis for them. She withstands all counterfeits, all mere animal excitement, all false teaching, all trust in man, declaring with the Apostle, "though we or an angel from Heaven, preach any other gospel, let him be accursed." She has opposed ultra measures and heretical teachers, maintaining the power of true revivals and withstanding their corruption and abuse. Thus ever is she upon the middle ground of truth, rejecting all extremes and refusing even the signs of an apparent miracle wrought against sound doctrine. She has not believed "when the Egyptians did so with their enchantments and Pharaoh's heart was hardened."

Brethren, we are compelled to speak thus if we speak at all in this matter. Let it be remembered, however, that this witness bearing church makes no arrogant pretensions of supremacy or infallibility. She confesses all who confess Christ; she even acknowledges those who refuse her the christian name, proclaiming themselves to be the only temple of the Lord. She claims no peculiar rights or privileges. She confesses that what she is, she is by the grace of God. She accepts the exhortation, "let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." She claims no power to lord it over men's consciences; she says to her teachers with the Apostle, "the servant of the

Lord should not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness, instructing those who oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgement of the truth." She has never rejected those who cast out devils, because they followed not with her. Ought we not to be more attached to our communion so honored of God, to do more for her increase and advancement, for her influence and extension? Are we not too indifferent to our denominational success? Is she not set for the defence of the gospel, is not her progress the furtherance of the truth? If our Presbyterian church exhibits christianity in its purest and simplest form, and this we profess by our adhesion to her, ought not our zeal to be increased to lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes? Ought we not to say of our Zion with the Psalmist, "if I forget thee, may my right hand forget her cunning?"

We are in the third and last place to consider the ruling Eldership and its duties.

The Constitution of the Presbyterian church, recognises the office of ruling Elder, as separate and distinct from that of Bishop, Minister or teaching Elder. They do not think the word of God vests the whole authority of the church in the hands of the Clergy—they believe the people, the ecclesia, the congregation are entitled to the choice of Elders, who are to represent them in the judicatories of the church, and that this election is ordinarily the call of God, the divine designatoin of the person or persons so elected to the office. They find historically that this usurpation by the clergy of the entire government of the church has been a fruitful source of disorder, oppression and

corruption. The result is seen in the ghostly tyranny of Rome, binding its subjects soul and body with fetters of ignorance and superstitution, deteriorating the nations subject to its sway, taxing their resources beyond endurance, making merchandize of the souls of men, and carrying its tariff of sin and prices of absolution into the unseen world.

In the Greek or Eastern church, we find the same source of decay producing similar effects, though in a less degree, and we cannot doubt that the early corruption of church order and government, the usurpation of the clergy and establishment of Prelacy, has been a prominent cause of their apostacy from the truth and of national declension We ground our belief of the right the laity to be represented in church courts and the divine warrant of the office of ruling Elder, not only upon the government of the Synagogue as adopted or rather continued by the Apostles, but upon various passages in the sacred Scriptures. We observe that in first Corinthians, 12, 28, it is said that besides Apostles and teachers, God has set in the church helps and governments. Again, first Timothy, 5, 17, "let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine;" implying the existance of both preaching and ruling Elders. Again, Romans 12 chapter, it is said "he that ruleth let him do it with diligence." In our form of government, the office is thus defined—"ruling Elders are properly the representatives of the people chosen by them for the purpose of exercising government and discipline in conjunction with pastors or ministers. This office has been understood by a great part of the Protestant

Reformed churches to be designated in the Holy Scriptures by the title of governments; and of those who rule well but do not labor in the word and doctrine." The proper character and duties of those who exercise this office are exhibited in the third chapter of the first Epistle to Timothy. They should be blameless and of good report, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour. They should be sober and given to hospitality. They should rule well their own households for how otherwise can they rule in the house of God, or know how to behave themselves in the house of God which is the church of the living God—the pillar and ground of the truth. They are not to be novices or given to wine, nor brawlers nor covetous. They are to hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. They are to be diligent in their office which implies the watch and care of the church. The duties of the church toward the eldership are honor, encouragement and obedience in the Lord. May the election of these brethren about to be set apart to this office, be for the glory of God, and the peace, purity and edification of the church. May it infuse new vigor into our counsels, and be sanctified not only to those who are called to bear rule in this congregation, but to every member of this christian society, concerning whom our prayer to God always is, that our blessed Savior may present each and every one of you, and of us also, faultless and spotless in his own righteousness before the presence of the Father in that great day when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth to receive according to the deeds done in the body. AMEN.

APPENDIX.

A Brief History of the Central Presbyterian Church.

This Church was organized on the 14th day of November, 1835, by the Presbytery of Buffalo, and consisted at that time, of the following members:

James J. Baldwin, Candace Baldwin, Ann Burgess, William G. Miller, Matilda Dickinson, Joseph Cooper, Reuben B. Heacock, Abba P. Heacock, Eliza Cotton, George Stow, Otis W. Norton, Hannah W. Norton, William B. Gilbert, Mary C. Gilbert, Emily Manville, John N. Reynolds, Ann Reynolds, Charles Hequembourg, Emma Hequembourg, Susan Hequembourg, James W. Vail, Daniel R. Hamlin, Euphemia Wheelock, E. M. Williams, Agnes Williams, Alden S. Sprague, Mrs. Mary Sprague, Hiram H. Reynolds, Julia Reynolds, Seth Beach, Mary Jane Heacock, Mrs. Sprague, Emma Hequembourg, jr.

Of this number, the following persons are still members of this Church:

James J. Baldwin, Candace Baldwin, his wife, Ann Burgess, Geo. Stow, Susan Hequembourg, (now Johnson,) Alden S. Sprague, Mary Sprague, his wife, H. H. Reynolds, Julia Reynolds, Mrs. Sprague.

The records from time to time of the organization, show large additions to this Church both by letters and confession, and notwithstanding the embarrassments connected with the erection of a costly edifice in 1836, which formed, until it was abandoned in 1848, a perpetual source of difficulty, yet the spiritual prosperity of the Church